

NEVADA BROADBAND TASK FORCE  
MEETING

August 20, 2013  
9 A.M.

**1. Call to order, roll call, and determination of quorum.**

Name	Affiliation	Present	Location
Brad Lyon	Moapa Telephone	X	Logandale
Daphne DeLeon	State Library and Archives	X	Reno
Ed Anderson	Nevada System of Higher Education	X	Reno
Elmer Porter	Eureka County School District		
Frank Woodbeck	Commission on Economic Development and DETR	X	Las Vegas
Jeff Fontaine	Nevada Association of Counties	X	Carson
Gerald Ackerman	University of Nevada School of Medicine	X	Elko
Randy Brown	AT&T		
Sherry Rupert	Nevada Indian Commission		
Linda Stinar	CenturyLink Communications	X	Las Vegas
Rick Nelson	Nevada Department of Transportation	X	Reno
Jim Garza	Economic Development Authority- White Pine County	X	Ely

Daphne DeLeon began the informational portion of the meeting at 9:00 A.M. as quorum was not yet established.

**8. Nevada Hospital Association Project Update- Bill Welch**

Bill Welch (Nevada Hospital Association) reported that Nevada Hospital Association is working with ATNI as it has received a federal grant extension for his project through September 30, 2014. There is the possibility of another extension through 2015, with the stipulation that negotiations continue with Commnet while doing the RFP process. Money was released at the federal level to pay vendors through April of this year, but NHA and e-care were not paid. The balance should be available in the next week or two, bringing NHA current with the vendors.

A proposal was received from Commnet, which is being reviewed. NHA has until September 30, 2013, to finalize the deal. The Commnet deal is being explored at the federal level, but just in case, the RFP has been initiated as a back-up plan.

There has also been a redesign of the project, which is now more focused on rural Nevada. Mr. Welch has spent 4 of the last 6 weeks on the road meeting with the hospitals wanting or

needing service. From Yerington in the north to Pahrump in the south, the process is underway to connect Nevada with fiber (loop).

### **Discussion**

Assemblyman James Oscarson asked what timeframe would apply if the RFP was to be initiated. Mr. Welch said the RFP process will take 45 to 90 days to procure another vendor. Rights-of-way have been approved and pole permits have been acquired. The last two things for the right-of-ways are finalizing the MOUs with Walker River and Yerington reservations. A ring around Carson City, Reno, and Silver Springs has been constructed.

Building up mechanics on the University of Nevada, Reno system is underway, too. Pulling cable from Silver Spring to Pahrump will take more time as there are some areas without poles and there will be the need to trench and lay conduit (about 16-20 miles). Permits for that function, though, have all been obtained. Although the focus of the grant is on educational and hospital needs, other public entities are being sought for sustainability. Nine rural hospitals, including their physician operations, are tied to the urban hospitals via the switch in Reno. The project will try to cover tele-medicine, tele-education, and health information exchange. Additionally, discussions are underway to address local school districts, law enforcement, and local governments.

Mrs. Daphne DeLeon asked with the new focus on rural Nevada, would NHA expand or revise locations. Mr. Welch answered it won't be going outside the original territories, but it could build last mile locations, which will provide sustainability, if we work things with Commnet with upgraded microwave or by bringing fiber to locations.

Gerald Ackerman commended Mr. Welch for his tenacity through the project.

**9:28 Frank Woodbeck and Linda Stinar join the meeting; quorum is established.**

### **3. Public Comment**

No public comment

### **4. Follow up on action items from previous meetings**

Lindsey Niedzielski spoke about a pending master grant meeting for infrastructure grants, which is scheduled for August 28, 2013, in the NSLA conference room. She asked for any additional RSVPs, having heard from NHA, ANTC, Commnet, and maybe Reno-Spark Indian Colony. Also, she requested a revised construction timeline, impacted locations, and potential issues – to be sent to her by August 23, 2013.

### **5. Approval of minutes from previous task force meetings**

Ed Anderson moved to approve. Frank Woodbeck seconded. Minutes were approved. Rick Nelson and Gerald Ackerman abstained.

### **6. Nevada HIT project update – Lynn O'Mara**

Lynn O'Mara (Department of Health and Human Services) stated contract negotiations are currently ongoing with the release of the RFP. Orion Health was chosen through the process and Direct Secure Messaging, CMS, will become standard. She discussed the health information exchange and physicians switching over to electronic health records. Regarding Medicare and Medicaid, regulations are in place. So, she said it is time to go in and start outreach efforts. It's part of the HIPAA process and the opt-in function of the project. She emphasized that individuals will have to give consent for electronic records sharing.

## **Discussion**

Mr. Ackerman stated that he knows adoption is being monitored and asked how many physicians have adopted EMRs. Ms. O'Mara answered that among physician offices, at least a third have formally adopted and another third are in the process to be complete sometime in the calendar year. Mrs. O'Mara stated the goal would be that at least half would have EMRs, but it's dependent on whether they will pursue financial incentives. In 2014, she said they should have more specific numbers through the survey with the University of Nevada, Reno.

Mr. Ackerman asked how the VA was participating in the systematic exchange process. Mrs. O'Mara replied that the VA and the DOD are trying to get systems to work together. It was stated that there is not much interest from the local VA, but maybe an improvement of interest once other organizations start to adopt.

Mrs. DeLeon asked about the percentage of facilities that would be expected to use the Orion system (state health information exchange system). Ms. O'Mara answered that she doesn't know but a better idea will be available as things stabilize and implementation is increased. Also, there is an attempt at the federal level to delay Phase 2 of the adoption.

Mr. Ackerman stated that the easy part is putting the HIT out there and we are asking a healthcare system not only to use the EMR and then also to exchange it, which presents an educational challenge, i.e., adoption challenge. Mrs. DeLeon agreed with that comment, both for patients and health systems.

Mr. Anderson stated that the issue needing to be dealt with is background checks (e.g., firearm purchases), wondering if anyone thinks there will be a comprehensive background check. Since law enforcement is not participating in this activity, there will need to be a new switch in mentality of how all of these systems will work. And, he asked: Is there a secure compiled database available and how does it interact with the healthcare information system?

Ms. O'Mara answered that there have been inquiries from law enforcement wondering how they legally get to HIE, but also noted that there will not be a HIE central database model, which is really something that will need to be utilized and validated/verified in the future.

Assemblyman Oscarson stated that those are policies and procedures that will be discussed at the state level and that those issues are a bit "out in the weeds."

Mrs. DeLeon replied that repurposing of collected data issues are not really within the authority of the task force, but could impact sustainability and it is important we start to think about concerns like this may arise from constituencies in the future. Mrs. O'Mara answered that we have an ONC site visit and will be meeting with the Project Officer to discuss infrastructure very soon.

## **7. SONNet project update - Chris Magenheimer**

From a written update, Ms. Niedzielski stated that NTIA grant is in preparation for FirstNet will be distributed in the month of September. The state and local implementation grant program is in phase 2 to prepare states for the nationwide public safety broadband network. Phase 1 is to help states establish and enhance existing government structure and develop outreach and educational programs for local government. Phase 2 will begin the process of identifying and mapping established broadband assets that could be use to enhance the nationwide network. Nevada should receive \$1.8M for the entire grant performance period of 3 years. Sonnet, the existing Nevada governance group, is planning on using Connect Nevada for support in both phases of this process. As grant funds are released, the board and the project manager will determine best processes to move forward with Connect Nevada and the team on ways to utilize the information that has already been collected through the task force and through the mapping project. The board will be meeting August 26, 2013, at the region's Emergency Operations Center for a meeting with the Office of Emergency Communications to update the goals, objectives, and mission statement of Nevada's effort to support public safety and its broadband network. Washoe County Sherriff Hailey, the chair of the SONNet board, will also use the opportunity to increase the education of the board and prepare its members for the SLIGP (state and local implementation grant) process. The board will be able to respond to the requirements of the grant much better with the information that will come for the LEC workshop. The public safety broadband network was established in February when the President signed into law HR3630. The goal of the law is to establish the nationwide LTE network for public safety, etc. FirstNet is implementing the law, providing information, and starting the network. The grant release is being waited on for continuation of the project.

## **Discussion**

Mrs. DeLeon asked if they anticipated a need to build out from existing infrastructure in Nevada to be part of the national network, to which Mr. Garza (Was this Jim?) said that the SLIGP will build the network (Radio Access Network / RAN) using new construction by FirstNet. The inadequacies of the infrastructure will need to be determined after the assets are determined and additional infrastructure needs will follow from that. Mrs. DeLeon then asked about the planning process timeframe. Mr. Garza (was this Jim?) answered that there will be some challenges in Nevada, being a huge, complicated undertaking, making it difficult to say how long the network build-out process will take. There will have to be a great deal of contracts and projects to understand the assets.

## **9. ARRA Project Reports**

### **Arizona Nevada Tower (ANTC) – Kevin Hayes**

ANTC has worked through environmental/BLM issues with support from Connect Nevada, the Rural Utilities Service, and Assemblyman Oscarson and Senator Goicochea. The construction completion timeline has been re-projected as July 3, 2014, launching the network in clusters. With a Community Connect grant, construction will start in Gabbs, then Yerington, then Fish Lake Valley and Esmeralda, and then Nye County.

## **Discussion**

Mrs. DeLeon asked for an update on the USDA/TAG (technical assistance grant) and how it relates to the efforts of Connect Nevada. Mr. Hayes responded that they need to identify gaps once ARRA programs are completed and, with Connect Nevada, identify gaps in the project. ANTC participated in creating some access plans, identifying needs, and are working on finalizing engineering designs. They are also completing some market studies, specifically speed tests, to create the deliverable (proformas). A Community Connect grant was also applied for in Lund in July. The proformas may result in more grant opportunities. Mrs. DeLeon asked if he has a 2015 projected end date, Mr. Hayes affirmed, but clarified that completion is expected next year.

## **10. Connect Nevada Update**

### **Upcoming Events**

Ms. Niedzielski reminded the group that the summit will be November 18, 2013. She is currently securing speakers/presenters, so there's still time for additional topics/speakers. Connect Nevada will provide travel for task force members – more information to follow as the date approaches. She also reminded the group of the grantee meeting scheduled for next week. Connect Nevada, with the USDA, is hosting a roundtable discussion about the uses of smart meters and smart technology in rural communities – invites forthcoming as this develops. Also, a conference is being planned for the Stronger Economies Together Project sometime in October to revisit the projects and other implementations. A policy brief about the Lifeline reform was sent out soliciting providers wanting to take advantage of financial incentives to help with network build-out.

### **Regional Planning**

Mrs. Erdody presented updates about the planning process for Region 1:

Churchill County's assessment is in final development and projecting end of October or early November to do its technology plan presentation, making Churchill County the second certified county in Nevada. Elko was expected to present its technology plan this month, but the chairperson's illness set it back to end of September or early October. Humboldt County is set for September 9, 2013. Lander County is set for September 4, 2013. No update from Lyon County. Pershing County is working on completing its projects and a meeting is scheduled for next week, so once the projects are approved by their technology committee, the assessment

can be submitted for plan development. Storey County technology plan presentation is scheduled for October 1, 2013.

Mr. Martinez presented updates for Region 2:

Douglas, Esmeralda, Eureka, and White Pine counties have all completed their technology action plans and are moving into implementation stage. Esmeralda County is scheduled for final technology plan presentation on September 17. Lincoln County, Mineral County, and Nye County are currently being worked with, and completion is expected in the next 3 months.

## **Discussion**

It was clarified by Ms. Niedzielski that the assessment presentations will be done, or nearly so, by the summit date, November 18, 2013. Interest was expressed by Mrs. DeLeon for an analysis of commonalities/rollup between the priority projects, which Ms. Niedzielski thought would be available, by and large, by the summit, with more comprehensive update in the next year. It was discussed that even a partial update, e.g., map would be helpful at the next task force meeting, not just for this group, but for comparison purposes for all the groups, perhaps as soon as next week's master grants meeting.

## **11. Review and discussion on future task force meeting dates and agenda items**

Mrs. DeLeon stated that, working with the Connect Nevada, the task force should start to compile deliverables/information from completed ARRA projects (e.g., Urban League) and PCC grants, (e.g., Lyon County) by September 30, 2013, with the goal of comparing that information with a map of the initial broadband availability. Also, there's a need to look at the assessments of the communities needs and project priorities. Also, a report will be out about next week's master grant meeting, plus a summit update with more information on speakers/agenda. Additionally, there's a need to discuss the broadband task force opening items that the group could present, at least from some of the members. The focus at the summit could be on more actively presenting (in view of the constituents) comparisons of the status from the beginning to the present, especially given the gracious travel support of CN. The expected next meeting date (last before the summit) is end of September or early October.

## **12. Information Items**

Mrs. DeLeon stated that the libraries have been put on alert nationwide. At the American Libraries Association (ALA) annual meeting the libraries' potential role as outreach partners was discussed. In Nevada, the NSLA is working with the Silver State Exchange. Mr. Ackerman responded that work is being done with Nevada Health Centers and Nevada Hospital Partners, putting in an RUS Telemedicine grant, hopefully funded, for 12 communities in the rural areas for some much-needed video capacity. He asked Mrs. Niedzielski if she'd contacted anyone from there to be summit presenters.

**13. Public Comment**

No public comment.

**14. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 10:23 A.M.